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## GLEANINGS IN FAMILY HISTORY FROM THE ANTRIM COAST.

### THE MAC NAGHTENS AND MAC NEILLS.

THE progenitors of the MacNaghtens and MacNeills formed part of that swarm of Scots which alighted on the Antrim coast in the sixteenth century. They came, as most other immigrants of that period, under the auspices of the MacDonnells. Multitudes from the Highlands and Isles of Scotland followed the fortunes of Alexander *Carrach*\* MacDonnell, encouraged by his genius as a military leader, and the protection which his influence in Ulster was able to secure. To that chieftain, indeed, wily and fierce though he was, may, to a large extent, be ascribed the introduction of the Scottish element into our population, which afterwards, in more peaceful times, contributed so much to the prosperity of this northern province.<sup>b</sup>

The MacDonnells, with their connexions and adherents, in coming to our coast, were seeking a country from which their ancestors, the Dalriadic colonists, had gone forth upwards of a

\* The epithet *Carrach*, or *scabed*, was frequently applied to Irish chieftains also. Dr. Reeves, in his "Account of the Crannoge of *Innishrush* and its *Ancient Occupants*," (Proceedings of R. I. Academy, vol. vii. p. 163,) mentions several instances in which it was employed to designate chiefs of the O'Neills, who lived between 1387 and 1586. The several corrupted forms of this epithet, as applied in the sense of nicknames, have puzzled most readers of our earlier Annals. Mr. Hans Hamilton, in the Preface to his admirable *Calendar of State Papers*, lately published, asks distractedly, "is *hairy*, or *harry*, or *charric*, or *charrie* the right way of spelling the epithet at the end of the long name *Alexander Oge McAlester Charrie*?"

<sup>b</sup> The late Rev. Dr. Reid, in his excellent *History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, chap. 1, note 5, describes the Scots who came with the MacDonnells in the sixteenth century as "*piratical marauders, and Roman Catholics, from the western islands*," and takes occasion to warn his readers that they are not to be "*confounded with those who came over at the Plantation of Ulster*." But although the former were soldiers, compelled to follow their chiefs when summoned, they were something more. They were industrious folks, who made the most of their own barren hills, and who, when they came to Antrim, soon proved their natural adaptation to agricultural pursuits. When

Sir Henry Sidney visited the North, in the year 1575, he seems to have been rather taken by surprise, on witnessing their comfortable condition. In writing to the Council in England, he says: "The Glynns and Route I found possessed by the Scottes, and nowe governed by Sorley Boy. *The countrie full of corne and cattle, and the Scottes very hauvie and proud, by reason of the late victories he hath had against our men, fynding the baseness of their courage.*"

Now, we venture to affirm, that those earlier comers, —although "*Roman Catholics*," and, to some extent, "*marauders*," —will contrast favourably with the people who came at the time of the Plantation. Of the latter, the Rev. Andrew Stewart has left the following record:— "From Scotland came many, and from England not a few, yet all of them, generally, *the scum of both nations,—who from debt, or breaking, or fleeing from justice, or seeking shelter, came hither, hoping to be without fear of man's justice in a land where there was nothing, or but little, as yet, of the fear of God.*" The writer of the above was Presbyterian minister at Donaghadee from 1645 to 1671, and thus able to speak from personal knowledge on questions of this nature. He is not likely to have exaggerated the sins of his own people. Dr. Reid cites him frequently, and has honestly quoted the passage given above.

thousand years before. From about the middle of the third to the beginning of the sixth century, various companies of emigrants departed from the Antrim shores, and eventually succeeded in forming a kingdom in North Britain, which included Cantire, Knapdale, Argyle, Lorn, Braidalbane, and the Western Isles or Hebrides. Among these early invaders of Britain were ancestors of the MacDonnells, and of the other principal Scottish families who came with them to Antrim in the sixteenth century. It is curious that, during the violent disputes between the Earls of Antrim and Argyle, in the reign of Charles I., Antrim laid claim to Argyle's estates in Cantire, which, the former declared, had belonged to his family for *thirteen centuries*,—or from soon after the settlement of the first colony in Britain, under Cairbre Riada, in the year 258.

But although the MacNaghtens and MacNeills came to the Antrim coast during the chieftainship of Alexander Carrach MacDonnell, they cannot be said to have had local habitations or names here, until the time of his grandson, Randall MacDonnell. The latter, if not the most distinguished, was certainly one of the most fortunate, of his race. Although a rebel and an outlaw in his youth, his age was crowned with honours. His elder brother, James, died at Dunluce, in March, 1601; and Randall, who had married the daughter of the great insurgent chief, Hugh O'Neill, continued with him as an active coadjutor, until the final struggle at Kinsale convinced him of the utter ruin of the native cause. He had taken the family position of his brother James, probably according to the arrangement in such cases required by the tanist law; but he had also seized the inheritance which his brother's eldest son afterwards claimed as the rightful heir. By a timely submission to the Government, Randall was permitted to hold the estates: and although the English law regulating succession to property was immediately afterwards introduced into this country, the nephew was unable to assert his claim.<sup>c</sup> Randall's submission to the Government was, no doubt, the more

<sup>c</sup> This young man did not submit to be thus set aside without a vigorous attempt to uphold his claim. It would appear that he appealed, in the first instance, to the newly introduced law of England, regulating succession to estates, but was met by his uncle on the plea that James MacDonnell had not been legally married, and that his children, therefore, were illegitimate. It is said that there exist certain curious manuscript documents relating to this question in the possession of descendants of James MacDonnell. The original of the following "Certificatt" is preserved among the Records of Carrickfergus, and is the only document, so far as we know, that has yet come to light in connexion with that grave family dispute. It was printed in McSkimmin's *History*:—

"Knowe all men to whom these presents shall come to be heard, reade, or seene, that we, Gory McHenry and Cahall O'Hara, Esquyers, doe hereby testifye, that we weare

present when Sir James McDonell, Knight, was married unto Mary McNeill, [rather O'Neill,] of Galchoane, in the O'Neve, in the lands of Clandonels, beyonde the Bande, by the Lord Bishop; and that Donell Oge McFee and Bryan O'Lavertye, with divers others, were present at the said Marriage, and knoweth thereof: and this is the cause of our knowledge that Alexander McDonell is the lawful sonne and heir of the said Sr. James McDonell, Knight.— Witness our hands, this 26th of Februarj, 1609.

"CAHALL O'HARA,  
his marke."

"G. McH."

The above seems to have been a highly respectable docu-

cordial, as Elizabeth had died, and was succeeded by James VI. of Scotland; for the chiefs of the Clan Donnell in Ulster had always yielded whatever amount of allegiance they could conveniently afford to the Scottish rather than to the English monarch. This fact was not unknown to James, and was not without its effect in quickly establishing cordial relations between his Government and the Antrim chief. The result was, that the latter, during the very first year of James's reign in England, (1603,) received a plenary grant of the Route and Glynn, a territory extending from Larne to Coleraine, and comprising about *three hundred and thirty-four thousand acres*, statute measure. These vast estates included the parishes of Coleraine, Ballyaghan, Ballywillen, Ballyrashane, Dunluce, Kildollagh, Ballintoy, Billy, Derrykeighan, Loughgill, Ballymoney, Kilraghts, Finvoy, Rasharkin, Dunaghy, Ramoan, Armoy, Culfeightrin, Layd, Ardelinis, Tickma-crevan, Templeoughter, Solar, Carncastle, Killyglen, Kilwaughter, and Larne, together with the Granges of Layd, Innispollan, and Drumtullagh, and the Island of Rathlín. The Antrim property, as originally granted to Randall MacDonnell, thus comprehended seven baronies, viz.: North-East Liberties of Coleraine, Lower Dunluce, Upper Dunluce, Kilconway, Carey, Lower Glenarm, and Upper Glenarm.

The lord of these broad lands, therefore, may well be described as a fortunate man, when it is remembered that not only had he done nothing to earn this magnificent grant from the English Government, but he had actually spent his youth in open and formidable rebellion. Cairbre Riada, a prince descended from the same family as the MacDonnells, had been granted, by the monarch of Ireland, in the third century, the territory extending along the Antrim coast, from the present village of Glynn to Bushmills, as a reward for his valour and fidelity in extinguishing a Pictish

ment, and it certainly places the fact of the marriage in a very clear and indisputable light. At an Inquisition held at Ballymena, in 1639, the name of "Cahall O'Hara, of L. Kane, Gent," is mentioned as one of the grand jury. The McHenry's ranked also among the gentry of that period. James, probably the son of "Gory" above-named, was a rebel leader in 1641, and was present at the battle of the *Laney*, near Ballymoney, on Friday, the 11th of February, 1642.

The family of Mary O'Neill (probably grand-daughter to Bryan Carrach O'Neill,) was of noble rank; and it is not likely that she would consent to live with Sir James MacDonnell on any other than reputable and legitimate terms. She was descended from *Aedh Buidhe*, or Hugh Boy I., who was the founder of the house of Clannaboy, and whom the O'Neills of Shane's Castle and the Bann-side claimed as their common ancestor. He was slain in 1283, and succeeded by his son Brian, who also was slain, in 1295. After him came, in succession, Henry O'Neill, Muircertach O'Neill, Brian

Ballogh O'Neill, and Aodh Buidhe, or Hugh Boy II., who was slain, in 1444. His successor, Brian O'Neill, died of small pox, in 1488, and was followed by Domhnall Donn, the founder of the *Clandonnells*, mentioned in the marriage certificate already quoted. He was succeeded by Shane Dubh O'Neill; and Shane by Cormac O'Neill. Cormac's successor was Brian Carrach O'Neill, who died about 1586, leaving two sons and at least one daughter. This account of Brian Carrach's descent is abridged from a most interesting paper by Dr. Reeves, printed in the *Proc. of the R. I. Academy*, vol. vii. p. 215.

Alexander MacDonnell was probably soon convinced that he had nothing to hope from going to law with his uncle: and, therefore, he appealed, in the second instance, to arms. This still more hopeless attempt was made in 1614. Of the details we know nothing, farther than that the insurrection caused some uneasiness to the Government, and ended without bringing redress to the party aggrieved.

rebellion throughout Ulster; but Randall MacDonnell received the much larger and more valuable possessions above mentioned, simply because he laid down his rebellious arms in good time, and with a good grace, when all hope of being able to wield them successfully had perished. The Government, however, had no reason to regret or repent its generosity in this instance; as Randall, from the moment of submission became, and continued to be, a loyal subject and a steady co-operator with the constituted authorities in the promotion of all measures supposed to be for the improvement of the country. Having obtained full and legal possession of his estates, he rejoiced to see the barbarous old customs of Tanistry and Gavelkind swept away, and the Brehon Law, in all its branches, utterly abolished. His object was now to enjoy his property in peace, and to improve it for transmission to his children: so it may be imagined with what delight he witnessed the institution of circuits in Ulster, and the advent, twice in the year, of itinerant judges, for the due and regular administration of justice. Honours were showered in quick succession on this fortunate descendant of Heremon; and perhaps, in the long line of ancestral chiefs, few, if any, were permitted such undisturbed enjoyment of life as he. In May, 1618, he was created Viscount Dunluce, a title drawn from the well-known castle on the coast, from which his father, Somhairle Buidhe, or Sorley Boy, had expelled the MacQuillans. In June, 1619, he was admitted as a member of his Majesty's Privy Council in Ireland, and at the same time appointed to the command of a regiment. In December, 1620, he was created Earl of Antrim. The grant of lands received from James I. was confirmed by Charles I. To promote peace and improvement on his estates, the first Earl of Antrim gave extensive fee-farm grants to the heads of certain Scottish families of respectability, whose ancestors had occupied such lands during the latter part of the sixteenth century. He also introduced a number of other families from Scotland, in addition to those already settled. To provide comfortable positions for the latter, the Irish population was either removed to barren districts—of which there were many on the estates—or transported to other parts of the kingdom.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>d</sup> Among the people thus removed was the remnant of the MacQuillans, once the reigning family in the Route. As a sort of equivalent for what they had lost, James I. granted them lands in the barony of Innishowen, which had formed part of the estates of the great rebel chief, Cahir O'Doherty. Sir Arthur Chichester was the chief agent in arranging this matter with the unfortunate Rory Oge MacQuillan. The latter was unable to face the difficulty of transporting all his wretched people over the Bann and Lough Foyle, and Chichester craftily persuaded him to cede his title to the barony of Innishowen, by an offer of certain lands very inferior in value, but lying nearer the Route. This trans-

\* "At present," (1790) adds Mr. Hamilton, "it is called *Clanaghurtie*. The descendant of MacQuillan is still to be found there among the lowest rank of the people, and only distinguished

action is recorded in a manuscript possessed by the Antrim family, and cited by the Rev. William Hamilton in his *Letters concerning the Northern Coast of the County of Antrim*. The concluding passage, as quoted by Mr. Hamilton, is as follows:—"The estate he [MacQuillan] got in exchange for the barony of Enishowen was called *Clanreaghurkie*,\* which was far inadequate to support the old hospitality of the MacQuillans. Rory Oge MacQuillan sold this land to one of Chichester's relations; and having got his new granted estate into one bag, was very generous and hospitable as long as the bag lasted. And thus was the worthy MacQuillan soon extinguished."

from his neighbours by the ludicrous title of *King MacQuillan*."  
"Tullit alter honores."

Among the Scottish families thus specially encouraged were the *MacNaghtens*, whose representative then was *Shane Dhu*, or Black John MacNaghten, the Earl's chief agent and faithful assistant in all matters connected with the regulation and improvement of the Antrim property. Indeed, their families were closely allied by intermarriages in Scotland. The MacNaghtens claim a long line of ancestors, not a few of whom were illustrious in their generations; and there is scarcely a period of the written or legendary history of Ireland and Scotland in which this name, in some form, does not appear.

In the Books of Lecan and Ballymote are two accounts of the first appearing of the *Cruithnians*, or *Picts*, in Ireland. These legendary histories—one of which is written in prose, and the other in verse—were added to the *Historia Britonum* of Nennius, probably about the year 1050, and have been translated by the Rev. Dr. Todd in connexion with that work. To the above very curious tracts we are indebted for the earliest existing notice of the progenitor of the MacNaghtens. According to both accounts, the Picts originally came from Thrace. The company or association of colonists consisted of three hundred and nine persons, under the superintendence of six brothers, one of whom was named *Nechtain*. Another of the brothers, called *Trostan*,\* was the Druid or priest of the expedition. They came in three ships; and, unlike other colonists, who generally landed in Britain and from thence reached Ireland sooner or later, the Picts steered direct for “Eri, the delightful.” Here they became a powerful tribe, so much so, indeed, that *Heremon*, the first king of the Scoti in Ireland, bribed them to depart, lest they should eventually become so strong as to dispute his sovereignty, and “make battle for Teamhair [Tara] as a possession.”

Whoever was the original chronicler of these events, which were passing about a thousand years before the Christian era, he evidently regretted the departure of that Pictish colony from Ireland. After describing, in terms somewhat obscure to modern apprehension, what he considered their superior civilization, the ancient writer exclaims, as if in the spirit of regret:—

“They passed away from us  
With the splendour of swiftness,  
To dwell by valour  
In the beautiful land of Ile.”

Whilst in Ireland they had taught, “in a fair and well-walled house,” certain branches of knowledge, which our translators term “necromancy and idolatry, druidism, plundering in ships, bright poems,” and which probably constituted a course of education in astronomy, navigation, general literature, and religion. “Among their sons were no thieves”—a very excellent and rare quality among human beings. “Hills and rocks they prepared for the plough,” which was a solid argument for their remaining in Ireland. But they were compelled, according to the terms of

\* This name still survives, as applied to a mountain in the neighbourhood of Cushendall, on which there are the remains of an ancient *Cairn*.

their arrangement with the Irish monarch, to take their departure, carrying with them their knowledge and industry to Isla, the principal island of the five which anciently constituted the *Ebudæ* or *Hebrides*. Isla was the ancient *Epidium*; and in mediæval times was, for a long period, the principal place of residence for the Lords of the Isles. Of the four other islands then constituting the *Hebrides*, two were called Ebuda, one Malos (Mull), and one Rhicina (Rathlin). These islands now constitute what are known as the *Inner* Hebrides, lying close to the Scottish coast, and separated from the outer group by the channel called the *Minch*. The four principal ones were Isla, Skye, Mull, and Jura, besides others of much smaller dimensions. The fact that *Rathlin* was regarded as one of the five islands known as the *Ebudæ*, is evidence of its early importance. Its position must, indeed, have rendered it a very much frequented place during those remote times, when colonists were moving so incessantly between the shores of Eri and Alba.

From the Hebrides the Picts afterwards spread themselves over the greater part of Scotland, and became a powerful people. They were the chief opponents of the Dalriadic colonists, and succeeded occasionally in expelling the latter from North Britain. In the long list of Pictish kings we find the name of *Nechtain* occurring more than once; and the family, no doubt, occupied a high position during the whole period of the existence of the Pictish nation.

Before leaving Ireland, the Picts requested Heremon to grant them wives from among his subjects, as a means of perpetuating the alliance then formed; and promised, at the same time, that on the posterity of the women thus granted, all the future Pictish acquisitions would devolve. This arrangement seems to have been the groundwork of the Pictish polity ever afterwards. There is a curious passage from Solinus,<sup>f</sup> quoted by the writer of Appendix xvii. to the Irish version of the *Historia Britonum* of Nennius, which evidently implies the existence of this peculiarity. The passage is as follows:—

“As you go from the Foreland of Calidonia (the Mull of Galloway) towards Thyle, in two days' sail you reach the islands of Hebudæ, five in number, of which the inhabitants subsist on fish and milk. They all (the islands) have but one king, for they are divided by narrow waters from each other. The king has nothing of his own: all things belong to all. Fixed laws compel him to equity; and, lest avarice should pervert him from truth, he learns justice from poverty, as having no private possessions. But he is maintained at the public expense. No wife is given to him for his own; but he takes for his use, by turns, whatsoever woman he is inclined to, by which means he is debarred from the wish and hope of having sons.” This account is substantially confirmed by the venerable Bede, who, in his monastery at Weymouth, near Durham, on the borders of the Pictish territories, had ample means of knowing the political constitution of their empire. He dwells particularly on the preference given to the female line, from the earliest record of the

<sup>f</sup>Solinus is supposed to have lived in the first half of the third century, and to have adopted pretty freely the opinions and statements of Pliny on geographical questions. Pliny names Rathlin *Ricina*.

Picts as a nation,—a preference founded, no doubt, on the original arrangement represented by the legendary account as having been entered into prior to their departure from Ireland, with their three hundred wives.<sup>8</sup>

From the nature of the Pictish polity in this respect, it is evident that no family, however influential, could aspire to a permanent, or even frequent, occupation of the throne. The fact, however, that the *Nechtain* race furnished *three sovereigns*, at long intervals, to the nation, is evidence that they were one of the governing families in Pictland. The first was *Nechtain-mor-breac*, who reigned thirty-four years. To him succeeded eight kings, derived from different families; and the ninth was Nechtain II., who reigned twenty years. This sovereign, about the year 608, founded the church of Abernethy. After him came nine sovereigns, from nine various families; and the tenth was another *Nechtain*, who reigned ten years. When the Picts became powerful as a nation in North Britain, they returned once more to the coasts of Ulster, and in Antrim they were able to establish themselves from the sea to the shores of Lough Neagh. Their rebellion against Cormac O'Cuinn, monarch of Ireland, in the third century, led to the expulsion of their colonies from Ulster, but did not prevent their occasional hostile incursions; and from that period to the end of the eighth century the annals of Ireland record many fierce encounters between them and the northern Irish. During the period now mentioned, the Nechtains figure in the Annals of Ulster as chiefs, having the prefix *Mac* to their names, denoting *offspring* or *descendants*. We read of the slaying of a *MacNaghten*, in the year 634; of the battle of *Druim-Nechtain*, in 685; of the death of *Fergus MacNechtain*, in 689; of the death of *Alpin MacNechtain*, in 692; and of several conflicts between the Cruithnians, or Picts, and the people of Ulster, in which members of this family were engaged. One of the earliest recorded names of Newry is *Iobhar Chinn Choiche mhic Neachtain*.<sup>9</sup>

When the Dalriadic kingdom in North Britain finally absorbed the Pictish possessions, in the reign of Kenneth MacAlpin, the *MacNechtains*, or *MacNaghtens*, re-appeared as one of the oldest and most influential of the Scottish clans. Their territory lay in Argyleshire, and, as thanes of Lochtay, they ruled supreme on the shores of Lochfine and Lochaw. Alexander III. of Scotland issued a patent, granting to *Gillechrist MacNaghten* and his heirs the Castle and Island of *Fraoch Eilen*, (Heath Island,) on condition that he would rebuild the castle, and keep it in proper condition for the reception of the king, should the latter at any time be disposed to claim its keeper's protection or hospitality. This patent is said to be still in existence; and there

<sup>8</sup> The following is the passage in the legend, referring to this arrangement :—

“There were oaths imposed on them,  
By the stars, by the earth,

That from the nobility of the mother,  
Should always be the right to the sovereignty.”

—*Hist. Britonum*, page 141.

<sup>9</sup> See the *Battle of Magh Rath*, as translated by Dr. O'Donovan, page 277.



is an anecdote in connexion with it to the effect that, in the year 1745, one of the MacNaghtens took forcible possession of the castle, (which then belonged to the Campbells,) and fitted it for the reception of the *Pretender*, hoping that he might give him a call! Duncan MacNaghten is mentioned in the annals of his time as in league with MacDougal, the Lord of Lorn, against Robert Bruce, at the battle of *Dalree*, for which he lost a portion of his estates. Sir Alexander, a descendant of Duncan, fell at the battle of Flodden. He was grandfather to *Shane Dhu*, or Black John MacNaghten, who, as above stated, was kinsman to the first Earl of Antrim, and became his principal agent in the management of the estates.

John died in 1630, leaving one son, Daniel, who married a niece of the primate, George Dowdall. The children of this marriage were, a son, John, who inherited the family estate and resided at Benvarden, near Ballymoney, and two sisters, married respectively into the families of Willoughby and MacManus. John married Helen Stafford, sister to the Right Hon. Edward Francis Stafford, of Portglenone. He was succeeded by his son John, who married a Miss MacManus, and was for many years a popular and respected magistrate in his own neighbourhood. The latter died, when his son and successor, John MacNaghten, was only a child six years old. The career of this son was melancholy, and his fate appalling. He was born about the year 1722, and educated first at Raphoe, and afterwards in Trinity College, Dublin. Even while attending school he became addicted to gambling, and continued a slave to that vice until it finally led to his ruin. He was compelled, when very young, to sell a part of his estate and mortgage the remainder, in order to meet his gambling debts. His first wife was a daughter of Dean Daniel, and sister to Lady Massereene. Her husband's reckless conduct was the cause of her death,—an event, however, which he sincerely deplored. His affairs soon after became desperate; but he still had influential friends who pitied him and helped him. Lord Massereene obtained for him the appointment of collector of taxes for the County of Coleraine, worth upwards of £200 a-year; and Mr. Workman, who had married his sister, became his security in a bond of £2,000. In less than two years he lost this situation, having embezzled £800 of the public money. In an evil hour, Andrew Knox, Esq., of Prehen, near Derry, invited the now friendless MacNaghten to spend a few weeks at his house, until some other situation might offer. He instantly formed the design of marrying Miss Knox, a girl of only fifteen years of age, but an heiress in her own right. MacNaghten induced her to read over with him the marriage ceremony in the presence of a third person, and then claimed her as his wife. Her father of course, resisted, and finally set aside the claim in the Court of Delegates. When Miss Knox was afterwards being removed to Dublin, accompanied by her father and mother, MacNaghten, with a servant and two tenants, surrounded the carriage on the road, about three miles from Strabane, for the purpose, as he alleged, of rescuing his wife. Mr. Knox was attended by two or three men servants, well armed, and a scuffle instantly ensued on the carriage being stopped. Several shots were fired by both parties. MacNaghten, having been wounded in the back, came

forward and fired deliberately into the carriage, with the intention of shooting Mr. Knox. The contents of the gun, however, entered Miss Knox's side, and she died after a few hours of agony, during which she uttered no complaints against any one, and only prayed fervently to be released from suffering. This melancholy affair occurred on the 10th of November, 1760. The names of MacNaghten's three associates were, George McDougall, James McCarrell, and Thomas Dunlap. Two hours after the murder, MacNaghten was taken after a fierce struggle, in which he first endeavoured to shoot his captors and then himself. McDougall and McCarrell escaped, but Dunlap was caught in a house at Ballyboggy, near Benvardeen. He and his master were imprisoned in Lifford jail until the 11th of the following December, when they were both tried, found guilty of the murder, and sentenced to death. When sentence was pronounced, MacNaghten implored the judges to have mercy on Dunlap, whom he spoke of as "a poor, simple fellow, his tenant, and not guilty of any crime." MacNaghten's defence of himself at the trial drew tears from many eyes; and his general deportment afterwards was such as to make him an object of interest to the people of the town and neighbourhood of Lifford. No carpenter could be found to erect the gallows, and an uncle of Miss Knox, with the assistance of some friends, was obliged to provide one, rather than see the criminals hanged from a tree; the smith who knocked off the hand-cuffs from MacNaghten, as a preliminary to the execution required by law, did so under compulsion; and the hangman had to be brought all the way from Cavan. MacNaghten conducted himself with the greatest coolness and dignity, declaring repeatedly that the anticipation of death was much more dreadful than the reality. To make his exit as easy and speedy as possible, he adjusted the rope securely on his own neck, and ascended to the very top of the ladder before throwing himself off, that the struggle might thus be terminated in a moment. The rope broke! The immense crowd uttered a triumphant shout, and urged him to escape, making way for him in all directions. But no. He calmly remounted the ladder, remarking, as tradition affirms, that no one would ever have to point at him or speak of him as *half-hanged MacNaghten*. The rope was knotted and adjusted as before, and after having done MacNaghten to death, it was removed to perform the same office for his wretched tenant and associate in crime. Their bodies were buried in one grave, behind the church of Strabane.

On the death of John MacNaghten, who left no children, the Benvardeen property was sold, and passed out of the family. He had a younger brother, who visited him twice during his imprisonment, and who became the founder of the Ballyboggy branch of the family. The MacNaghtens of Bushmills descend from an uncle of the unfortunate John MacNaghten, who was born in the year 1678, and was the first person of the name who owned the Beardville property. From his uncle, the graceless nephew had large expectations; but his conduct so thoroughly disgusted the old gentleman that he determined his property should not pass to a person unworthy of his name. To make this matter certain, the uncle married a young wife when he himself had

attained the patriarchal age of eighty-two. This lady was the daughter of John Johnston, Esq., of Belfast. Mr. MacNaghten settled his estate upon her during her life, provided she had no family: and this arrangement is said to have rendered the nephew desperate, and to have hastened the catastrophe in which he so ignobly perished.

The patriarchal owner of Beardville had two sons born to him, lived until he had entered on his *one hundred and third year*, and assisted at the family celebration observed on his younger son's coming of age. He remembered the siege of Derry quite distinctly, and could enumerate the names of the tenants on his father's estate who were present in the Maiden City during that memorable time. He was succeeded by his son, Edward Alexander MacNaghten, born in the month of August, 1762. This gentleman was one of the representatives of the County of Antrim in the Irish Parliament for many years. He obtained another distinction, which, although unsubstantial, was perhaps gratifying. His kinsmen of the sept of MacNaghten in Argyleshire elected him to the chieftainship of the clan, and this honour has descended to his successors. A patent was issued, and duly registered in the Herald's Office, conferring this dignity, in the year 1832. This very unusual proceeding was not brought about by any solicitation from Mr. MacNaghten, but simply from a conviction on the part of the clansmen that his rank and position would enable him to uphold the honours of the name more worthily than any Scottish gentleman then connected with the family. It was done on the old *tanist* principle, and is perhaps worth mentioning as one of the latest illustrations of that law with which we are acquainted. It is not improbable, however, that similar cases may still occur among the remnant of the clans in the North Highlands of Scotland. The laird of MacNaghten had lost the greater part of his estates by joining Montrose; and extravagance and negligence afterwards completed the ruin of the Scottish branch. The last laird was evicted from the remnant of the estates by relentless creditors, and for small debts, the sum total of which did amount to more than half the value of his little patrimony. His eldest son became a captain in the Scottish foot guards, and closed his life "on a blood-red field of Spain." His younger son obtained an appointment as a custom-house officer, and died in obscurity, at some port on the eastern coast of Scotland. So, the shores of Lochfine and Lochaw know them no more; and their ancient castle of *Dunaraw* has disappeared from the rock which it occupied through so many stormy centuries, on the western side of the former of these lakes.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst the Scottish branch of the family thus decayed, the plant that had taken root in Irish soil became every year more vigorous and flourishing. Edmund Alexander MacNaghten, of Beardville, died in 1832, after reaching the seventieth year of his age. He was succeeded by his brother, the late Francis Workman MacNaghten, born in 1763. At an early period of his life, the latter selected the East as the field of effort; and when he retired, he bore away from this field an ample harvest both of honours and riches. In 1809 he received the honour of knighthood, on

<sup>1</sup> See Buchanan's *Ancient Scottish Surnames*, pages 67 & 68.

being appointed a Judge of the Supreme Court of Judicature, at Madras. In 1815 he was transferred from Madras to the more responsible and remunerative position in Bengal. In 1825 he returned to his native place, and enjoyed the remainder of his long life as country gentlemen with ample means generally like to do—in plantings and prunings—immured in rural blessings and recreations, with occasionally the variety of presiding on the magisterial bench of the nearest village. In 1836 he was created a baronet, and bore his honours becomingly until his death, which occurred in 1843, when he was eighty-eight years of age.

In 1787, he had married Letitia, the daughter of Sir William Dunkin, another successful Indian lawyer, who had risen also to be a judge in the Supreme Court of Judicature, at Calcutta, and retired at last to spend the evening of his days at Clogher, near Bushmills. This marriage was blessed with a numerous family, as the following list will show:—1. Sir Edmund Charles, the present baronet. In 1827 he married Mary, the only child of Edward Gwatkin, Esq. He is a barrister-at-law, and at the time of his father's death, was a Master in Chancery, at Calcutta. 2. William Hay, of the Bengal service, who was created a baronet in 1839, and assassinated two years afterwards, at Caubul. 3. Francis, in the Bengal service, and married to Miss Connolly. 4. Elliot, of the Supreme Court of Judicature, Calcutta, and married to Miss Law. 5. John Dunkin, a cavalry officer, in the service of the late East India Company. 6. Stewart, of the Middle Temple. 7. Anne, married to the Rev. Richard Olpherts, and since dead. 8. Eliza Serena, married to Major Sewell. 9. Letitia, married to David Hill, Esq., of the late East India Company's civil service. 10. Matilda, married to John Trotter, Esq. 11. Jane Russell, married to Thomas Gowan Vibart, Esq., of the Bengal service. 12. Maria, married to Thos. Roberts Thellusson, Esq. 13. Caroline, married to Alfred Chapman, Esq. 14. Alicia, married to George Probyn, Esq. 15. Ellen. 16. Hannah.

The second son, Sir William Hay MacNaghten, was British envoy to the Shah Soojah, at the time of his death, which happened on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December, 1841, in the 48<sup>th</sup> year of his age. He was assassinated by Mohammed Akbar Khan, the son of the celebrated Dost Mohammed. On pretence of entering into amicable arrangements with the British authorities, the Indian chief invited Sir William to a conference. The latter consented, and went to the place of meeting, accompanied by four officers and a small escort. Soon after the opening of the meeting, Mohammed Akbar drew a pistol and shot him dead. Captain Trevor, one of the four officers, was cut down in attempting to rescue his chief; the other three were taken prisoners. MacNaghten's head was cut off, and paraded throughout the town, the mouth filled with a portion of his mutilated body, and the nose surmounted with the green spectacles he had worn when living. "Thus perished," says Kaye, (the historian of the *War in Afghanistan*,) "as brave a gentleman as ever, in the midst of fiery trial, struggled manfully to rescue from disgrace the reputation of a great country. Whatever may be the judgment of posterity on other phases of his character and other incidents of his career, the

historian will ever dwell with pride upon the unfailing courage and constancy of the man who, with every thing to discourage and depress him, and surrounded by all enervating influences, was ever eager to counsel the nobler and manlier course, ever ready to bear the burdens of responsibility, and face the assaults of danger."

The original burial-ground of the MacNaghtens, on their coming to Ireland, was *Bun-na-Mairge*, near Ballycastle. In the south wall of what was once the grand chapel of the monastery, and at a little distance to the right of the entrance to the Antrim vault, the following inscription, on a large red free-stone slab, is still legible:—

" HEIRE · LYETH · THE · BODIE · OF · JHN · MNAGHTAN ·  
FIRST · SECTARIE [SECRETARY] · TO · RANDAL · FIRST · ERLE · OF · ANTRIM, · WHO · DEPARTED · THIS · MORTALITIE  
IN · THE · YEAR · OF · OUR · LORD · GOD · 1630 . "

The above is the epitaph over the grave of Shane Dhu (Black John) MacNaghten, already mentioned. *Bun-na-Mairge* has been long abandoned by the family as a place of sepulture.

#### THE MAC NEILLS.

The MACNEILLS of the Antrim coast descend from the Hy-Niall race, many of whom undoubtedly emigrated to North Britain in the Dalriadic movement already referred to. Indeed, it may be safely asserted, that to a prince of their race that movement was mainly indebted for its ultimate success. The Cruithnians or Picts were sometimes more than a match for the Antrim colonists in Scotland; and on one occasion the latter were expelled almost to man, and forced to return to the Irish Dalriada, under the guidance of their prince, *Eochy*, or *Eochad Muinreamhair*. During the century which followed this expulsion, many attempts were made by the Irish to re-establish themselves on the opposite shores. All these efforts, however, were without success, until the *Hy-Niall* (O'Neills,) became the ruling power in Ireland, and sent forth a sufficient force under the command of *Loarn*, the son of *Erek*, the son of *Eochad Muinreamhair*, which not only reconquered the lost territory in North Britain, but added other possessions. It is curious how these historical events are corroborated by a passage in the *Vita Septima Sancti Patricii*, published by Colgan in his *Trias Thaumaturga*. The author of that *Life* of the saint states that, while Patrick went about preaching Christianity from place to place, he came to the Glynns, in which the family of the above-mentioned Muinreamhair ruled, at the very time he was writing, probably about twenty years after the saint's death.

The Hy-Niall race of princes, notwithstanding some serious faults, were always popular. They all, more or less, felt the responsibility inseparable from the position of rulers, and accepted the elevation to regal authority as a trust to be held for the security and happiness of their subjects. History has not failed to record this admirable qualification, which, even at the present day, is so

seldom found among the great ones of the earth. When the descendants of these princes reappear as chiefs of the MacNeills of Scotland, they still, after centuries of change and vicissitude, retain much of the same generous nature. The MacNeills of *Barra* (from whom the extinct Antrim branch descended,) are represented as maintaining the most harmonious relations among themselves as a clan. The chief and his people were always mutually attached to each other; the former holding himself bound to compensate the clansmen for any losses suffered by them from misfortune or war. As landlord, he also provided for the support of such as were unable, whether from sickness, accident, or old age, to make provision for themselves. The result of this ancient, unwritten, but perfectly valid arrangement may be easily supposed. The MacNeills, as a clan, were proverbial for loyalty to their chiefs. Philosophical tourists to the Island of Barra, whilst deprecating the stern and suspicious bearing of the natives towards strangers, are loud in praises of their union among themselves, and their uncompromising fidelity to their chiefs. The principal fortress of the clan was situated on the little isle of *Kismul*, near Barra, in which a watchman and constable were stationed day and night. These functionaries were so faithful to their trust, that neither book-compilers nor prying philosophers could succeed, even by the most earnest entreaties, in gaining access to the building during the absence of the chief. The watchman for the time being was required to call out at intervals, if for no other purpose, at least as an evidence of his vigilance. His announcements, moreover, were expected to be made *in rhymes*, which were handed down, cut and dry, from generation to generation. It is quite certain, however, that the MacNeills had *bardic* tendencies from nature, as their clan was celebrated for supplying some of the most favourable specimens of the class known as *harpers* in former times. The hereditary harpers to the *MacLeans* of Dowart, in Mull, were MacNeills. One particular family of the latter furnished bards, in succession, to the clan Ranald (MacDonnells) for the space of nearly six hundred years. The last was Lachlan MacNeill, who, in establishing his right to certain lands, declared on oath, before Roderick MacLeod, Esq., J.P., and a number of clergymen, that he was the 18<sup>th</sup> in descent whose ancestors had officiated as bards to the MacDonnells of the Isles; and that they enjoyed, as salary for their office, from generation to generation, the farm of *Staoiligary*, and four pennies of *Drimisdale*. Their duties were, to preserve and continue the genealogy and history of the MacDonnells. This gentleman was styled bard, genealogist, and seanachaidh. Dr. MacPherson, in a letter to Dr. Blair, describes Lachlan MacNeill as "a man of some letters, and who had, like his ancestors, received his education in Ireland, and knew Latin tolerably well."<sup>k</sup>

The MacNeills, on coming to the Antrim coast, had no settled place of residence; but, like others of their countrymen similarly circumstanced, kept moving about in the Glynnys, as suited their convenience in those troublesome times. On the suppression of Tyrone's rebellion, more

<sup>k</sup> See Logan's *Scottish Gael*, vol. i., pp. 185, 333; vol. ii., pp. 217, 268. Where in Ireland were those Gaelic bards prepared for their work?

peaceful years ensued. One of the earliest grants made on the Antrim property was that which conveyed the lands constituting the *Ballycastle Estate* to Hugh MacNeill. Tradition affirms that MacNeill had previously resided by the side of the old road leading from Cushindall to Ballycastle, and that the grant in the fertile region around the latter town was given to him in consideration of assistance or service rendered to the MacDonnells on some emergency, the precise nature of which is not known. The grant is dated on the 9th of November, 1612, and it describes Hugh MacNeill as of *Dunynie* castle, constable and gentleman. This castle, the ruins of which still exist, was the principal residence in the district at that period; and, judging from its solid masonry, as well as its position on a cliff more than three hundred feet above the sea, it must have been a formidable fortress. It stood about half-a-mile west of the present town of Ballycastle, and the place is now known as *Dun-na-Neenias*. The names of the several lands, as recited in this grant, are as follow, viz.: "The townland of *Ballrentinney*; the quarterland of the *Brummomore* and *Liscallen*; the quarterland called *Drumnacree*, and quarter of *Ballyvarnyne*; the quarterland called *Dromand*; the quarterland of *Ballyjenige*; the forty acres of *Clancashan*; the five acres of *Craigmore*; and the five acres land of *Port Bretts*; together with the constableness and keeping of the market towns or villages of *Dunynie* and *Ballycashan*, with the customs thereof."

*Brummomore* is now *Bromore*, and *Liscallen* is known as *Cnoc-na-Cellach*. *Dromand* has changed slightly to *Drummanns*. The forty acres of *Clan-Cashan* included the village of Ballycashan, which afterwards became the town of Ballycastle. *Port Bretts* was the landing-place in *Marketon* (or more correctly *Mairge-town*) Bay, and must have been a place of some importance even so recently as the date of this grant, which stipulates that Sir Randall MacDonnell and Lady Alice O'Neill, his wife, were to have the customs of "wynne, oil, and aqua-vitae," arising from the trade in these commodities. The village of *Dunynie* has wholly disappeared from the hill. It was originally created, no doubt, by the combined influence of the castle and of the fair which was held near it in former days. *Port-Bretts* is a corruption for *Port-Britus*, or *Port-Britas*, a name which is now obsolete in all its forms, but which we have seen written *Portbritis*, and occasionally *Portbritas*, in old rent-rolls and other papers of the Antrim estates in the seventeenth century. It may, perhaps, have been originally derived from *Britus*, whom the Irish legends represent as of the family or race of *Nemedh*, one of the earliest colonizers of Ireland. For some reason which we have not seen explained, the Irish legend adds the epithet *Maol* to *Britus*; and it is curious that the earliest recorded name of this northern part of the channel between Ireland and Scotland is *Sruth-na-Maoile*, "the course or current of the Moyle." If that famous colonist has thus left his name in connexion with the channel, he must have lived at a very early period, as *Sruth-na-Maoile* has had time since his day to become the scene of an ancient mythological romance. On its waters, the three daughters of *Lir*, changed into swans, were doomed to sojourn until the dawn of Christianity in Ireland, when the first sound of the "church-going bell" was to be the signal for their release!<sup>1</sup> The poet

<sup>1</sup> See *The Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, vol. i., page 230.

Moore has enshrined this old faith—or fable if you will—in his beautiful song of *Fionnuala*; having first met with it, he says, “among some manuscript translations from the Irish, which were begun under the direction of that enlightened friend of Ireland, the late Countess of Moira.” *Fionnuala* was the name of one of the doomed daughters of Lir; and the poet represents her as thus, naturally enough, expressing her anxiety to be relieved from Sruth-na-Maoile:—

“Sadly, oh Moyle, to thy winter-wave weeping,  
Fate bids me languish long ages away;  
Yet still in her darkness doth Erin lie sleeping,  
And still doth the pure light its dawning delay.”

If Port-Britus, however, does not actually bear the name of an early Nemedian colonist, the place must have been so called from the fact of its being known as a port available for purposes of trade and emigration between this country and Britain. The name may have thus come originally into use so early as the first century, when many of the inhabitants of Britain sought a refuge on these shores, to live peaceably beyond the reach of the Roman legions which then advanced victoriously from the south. *Richard of Cirencester* is said to have preserved certain curious notices of the British emigration into Ireland, at the period now mentioned, but we have not had an opportunity of consulting that early chronicler. With respect to the motives which induced the Britons thus to seek a home in Ireland, the prevailing opinion is, that they preferred the comparative quiet and security of this country to the numerous changes, in the shape of improvements, which the Romans were introducing into Britain. The emigrants—or rather, in this case, immigrants—were content to bid *adieu* to their old homes, rather than encounter the insolence of their conquerors; and sought the Irish shore, “that they might not lose sight of that liberty in their old age, which in their younger years they had received pure and uncorrupted from nature.”<sup>m</sup>

The Dunynie grant stipulated that Hugh MacNeill was to pay “nyne pounds” rent yearly, in two equal payments, at the first day of November, and the first day of May; and also a fair proportion of the rent payable to the king out of the Route and Glyns. He was to forfeit five shillings per day for every day the rent remained unpaid after it became due; and at the end of fifteen days, his “chattels were to be pryced by four sworn men, and sold for the amount due.” In case of non-payment of rent for a whole year, the grant became null, and the landlord would be at liberty to resume the possession of his lands. Should the tenant “alien” any part of the lands, without permission from the landlord, or should he or his heirs “misbehave themselves, either in obedience, troth, or loyaltie,” they would thus forfeit their title to the estate. MacNeill and his heirs were bound, by the terms of the grant, to do suit and service to the *Courts Leet* and *Courts Baron* established on the landlord’s estates; and should they take any cause for trial into the sheriff’s court, they would subject themselves to

<sup>m</sup> Camden’s *Britannia*, page 342, of the Edition of 1723.



a penalty, for so doing. They were farther required to have their grain made into meal at the mill of the landlord, paying toll and mulcture to the same; and to appear at every general *Hosting*, with as many men and arms as were proportioned to the extent of their lands.

The only remaining point in this document worthy of notice is a clause which reserves to Sir Randall MacDonnell and Lady Alice O'Neill the right of residence, should they wish it, at either or both of the villages of Dunynie and Ballycashan. They availed themselves of this privilege eighteen years afterwards, (at least in reference to the latter place,) where they erected a castle, (1628-1630,) being attracted to the locality, no doubt, by the surpassing beauty of its natural scenery. On this spot stood the castle of James MacDonnell, which was stormed and taken by Shane O'Neill, in April, 1565. Shane's celebrated letter, giving an account to the Lord Justice of his great victory over the Scots, is dated from *Boile-Caislein*, on the 2d of May, in that year. In this letter, O'Neill describes his sudden march upon the Scots—his conflict with Sorley Boy as he approached this town and castle, which he states belonged to James MacDonnell;—the siege of Boile-Caiselin;—the arrival of forces from Scotland, and the occurrence of a great battle, in which James and Sorley Boy were taken prisoners, and their brother Angus slain, with 700 or 800 Scots.<sup>a</sup> The place has since exchanged its old name for the more modern one of *Ballycastle*. The position was, indeed, tastefully selected. The whole beautiful vale extending to the beach was one open space, and formed a part of the castle park. Besides the grand coast scenery north and east, the castle commanded a full view of that charming Glen between Armoy and Ballycastle, along which was the ancient path of communication from the former place to the coast. In this castle, the family of the first Earl of Antrim occasionally resided; and at his death, in 1636, his Countess, with her two daughters, removed from Dunluce, and lived at Ballycastle until the end of 1641. There are still a few lingering traditions of Alice O'Neill in the place, none of which are particularly complimentary to her memory. An old gentleman, the last male representative of the once powerful family of MacAlaster, of Kinban Castle, used to tell an anecdote of the Lady Alice, which, he said, had been handed down in his family. On one occasion, the body of a dead infant was found in the immediate vicinity of the castle. There was something like an investigation as to the cause of the death, required by the new laws and arrangements introduced at the time of the Plantation of Ulster. The countess, who cherished her family hatred of everything *English*, was of opinion that there

<sup>a</sup> See *Calendar of State Papers*, just published, and so ably edited by Hans C. Hamilton, Esq., page 260. Shane O'Neill's letter does not name the *field of battle*; but the *Annals of Ireland* state that it was *Gleann-taissi*, or *Gleann-taoise*, which has been generally supposed to be *Glenshesk*. Although this glen was the scene of many such conflicts, there are one or two circumstances which tend at least to weaken the conclusion that it witnessed the battle now re-

ferred to. It is much more likely, for instance, that O'Neill would advance on Ballycastle by the glen on the north-western side of *Knocklayde*, stretching from Armoy, than through *Glenshesk*, whose approaches were not, certainly, very tempting to a large force. The stream in the glen leading from Armoy is now called the *Tow*, and the ancient *Gleann-taissi* or *taoise* would be anglicised *Glen-Tow*, not *Glenshesk*.

was a great deal too much fuss made about so small a matter as the death of an infant. She is reported to have exclaimed *in Irish*, "The devil! Why all this parade about a dead infant! Often have I seen such things at my father's castle!"

We find that the grant was signed, "*Randal MacDonnell*," and "*John Steward*, × his marke, as a Ffeoffee." The latter signed as a witness. He was the first settler of the name of Stewart in the parish of Ballintoy; and, although in the rank of a gentleman, he was evidently unable to sign his name. This inability, however, was not remarkable in an age when even the gentry, particularly of the Scottish Isles, had no time to devote to literary refinement. The poorest peasant on the Ballintoy estate, at the present day, would be an overmatch in the art of writing for the distinguished original "Ffeoffee" who has left his scratch by way of mark on this old deed.

On the ninth of December, 1612, just a month subsequently to the date of the grant, it is recorded on the document that John MacNaghten, "a true and lawful attorney," gave possession to Hugh MacNeill of the townland of Brummemore (Bromore), in the name of all the other lands specified. One of the witnesses to this proceeding was "Henry Quinne." The name of the other is rather a puzzle; it looks like "*MacGwillen T.*"—probably a MacQuillan. There are still a few very poor families of this name in the parish of Ramoan, but they are now called *MacQuilkins*.

The MacNeills of Dun-na-neenie Castle continued to hold their lands in peace during the life of the first Earl of Antrim. In the time of the second Earl, they were required to furnish supplies of men to the "Hostings" against the Irish rebels of 1641, a duty to which their political sentiments cordially prompted them.

In the time of the third Earl, who was a very determined Roman Catholic, some difficulty arose as to the MacNeills' title to their property. Certain law proceedings, the precise nature of which I cannot ascertain, were instituted by Hugh MacNeill, a son of the gentleman named in

◦ During the time of the great rebellion conducted by Hugh O'Neill, father to the Countess of Antrim, dead children were no uncommon sights; and living children were sometimes found eating their dead mothers! Sir Arthur Chichester's policy was, that "*hunger would be a better, because speedier, means of destruction to employ against the Irish than the sword.*" But, as far as possible, he wielded both with the most revolting and fiendish complacency. He speaks of a journey he made at this time, from Carrickfergus to the neighbourhood of Dungannon, along the banks of Lough Neagh, in the following terms:—"I burned all along the Lough, within four miles of Dungannon, and killed 100 people, sparing none, of what quality, age, or sex soever, besides many burned to death; we kill man, woman, and child; horse, beast, and whatsoever we find." After detailing the circumstances of a similar journey into

the Route, he concludes in these words: "*I have often sayd and written yt is famine that must consume them; our swords and other indeavours worke not that speedie effect which is expected; for their overthrowes are safeties to the speedie runners, upon which we kylle no multitudes.*"

This stolid monster, but famous statesman and soldier, died full of honours, and lies buried at Carrickfergus. The following lines are part (and only a very small part) of his wordy epitaph:—

"Within this bedd of death a Viceroy lyes,  
Whose fame shall ever live; Virtue ne'er dyes:  
For he did virtue and religion norishe,  
And made this land, late rude, with peace to flourish."

The reader may see the whole production, prose and verse, in *McSkinmin's History of Carrickfergus*. (2nd edition, pp. 149, 151.)

the original grant. The defendants in the suit were the Earl of Antrim (Alexander MacDonnell), Daniel MacDonnell, Esq., and Æneas or Angus Black. These proceedings required the production of the old Deed of 1612; and accordingly it was produced at Bushmills, on the 28th of April, 1686, and sworn to as genuine by Robert Kennedy, Alexander Macaulay, Bryan (Bryce?) Dunlop, Neal MacNeill, and Owen O'Mullan, Esquires. The witnesses to this act were Charles Steward, Robert Griffith, and John MacNaghten. The plaintiff in this suit had, no doubt, maintained his right and title intact, as the estate descended in due course to his son Daniel. The family of the latter consisted of two children, a son and daughter. The son did not inherit. One account states that he died before coming of age, and another that he was of unsound mind. The estate then passed to his sister, Rose MacNeill, who married the Rev. William Boyd, rector of the parish of Ramoan. The Ballycastle estate thus passed to the family of Boyd, in which it has remained to the present time.

There are other families of MacNeills on the coast, but if connected at all with the old line of Dunynie, it must be in a very remote degree. The late John MacNeale, of Ballycastle, descended from Neale MacNeill, who, in 1686, was one of the vouchers, at Bushmills, for the genuineness of the old grant of 1612, as already stated. His family, probably, was the nearest collateral branch to the main stock. The original Hugh MacNeill, is represented, through his great grand-daughter Rose, by Hugh Boyd, the present owner of the estate, and Alexander Boyd, his brother, now residing at Ballycastle.

The family burying-ground of the MacNeills was Ramoan. In the north wall of this very ancient cemetery, there was a tablet to mark their graves, but the inscriptions are now illegible. The rector, William Boyd, who married Rose MacNeill, is also buried there. Their son, Hugh Boyd, built a church at his own expense in Ballycastle, having a vault underneath, which he himself was the first to occupy, and in which his successors are interred.

Belfast.

GEO. HILL.